UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10/589,043 | 08/10/2006 | Hideki Oki | S1459.70129US00 | 4064 |

23628 7590 01/14/2009

WOLF GREENFIELD & SACKS, P.C.
600 ATLANTIC AVENUE
BOSTON, MA 02210-2206

| EXAMINER | |
|---|---|
| BEST, ZACHARY P | |

| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
|---|---|
| 1795 | |

| MAIL DATE | DELIVERY MODE |
|---|---|
| 01/14/2009 | PAPER |

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 10/589,043 | OKI ET AL. | |
| | Examiner | Art Unit | |
| | Zachary Best | 1795 | |

*-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --*

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *19 November 2008*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-20* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-20* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

**ELECTROCHEMICAL DEVICE AND ELECTRODE SUITABLE FOR USE IN PRIMARY AND/OR SECONDARY BATTERIES**

Examiner: Z. Best S.N. 10/589,043 Art Unit: 1795 January 12, 2009

***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 19, 2008 has been entered. Claims 1, 10, and 12-13 were amended.

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

***Specification***

3. The objection to the specification is withdrawn because the title was amended.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

5. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The claim limitations in independent Claims 1 and 10 "at least some ions from the ionic conductor undergo surface interactions with particles in the active material; and lattice parameters of the active material are substantially unchanged after the surface interactions" are not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. If Applicant believes the rejections were made in error, Examiner requests Applicant point, with specificity, to where Applicant believes said limitation is reasonably conveyed.

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claim 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The term "substantially" in Claims 1, 10, and 12-13 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite. The term "substantially" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and

one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

8. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of Claims 1-20 as being unpatentable over Hoffman et al. (US 4,894,302) in view of Mayes et al (US 2002/0048706 A1) is maintained.

Regarding Claim 1, Hoffman et al. teach an electrochemical device, which comprises a first pole (3), a second pole (2), and an ionic conductor (4), wherein said first pole containing an active material comprising Ru or Co (col. 5, lines 61-65, Group 8), and said ionic conductor containing Mg, Al, or Ca (Hoffman et al. claims 1-2), wherein the lattice parameters are substantially unchanged (col. 7, lines 3-8). While Hoffman do not specifically teach "surface interactions," it is Examiner's position that the surface interactions would be inherent given that ions must pass through the surface of the active material particles in order to intercalate (col. 7, lines 9-14). However, Hoffman et al. fail to teach said active material has an average particle diameter as small as 1 nanometer.

Mayes et al. teach an electrochemical cell comprising an electrochemical reaction wherein an ion conductive species is intercalated into a host material during the electrochemical reaction (par. 7), wherein the ion host particles preferably less than 10 nm in diameter because the use of finer particles minimizes the detrimental effects of volume change occurring naturally during the intercalation of the ion conductive species (par. 106). Mayes et al. further suggest the ion conductive species may be calcium or magnesium ions

(par. 103). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the active material of Hoffman et al. have an average particle diameter as small as 1 nm Mayes et al. teach that smaller particle sizes in electrochemical cells where intercalation occurs minimize the detrimental effects of volume change of the host material. Discovery of an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272 (CCPA 1980).

Regarding Claim 2, Hoffman et al. teach the electrochemical device of the first pole is managenese oxide or cobalt oxide (col. 5, lines 65-68).

Regarding Claim 3, Hoffman et al. teach said cobalt oxide ($Co_3O_4$), which has a ratio of M/X of 0.75.

Regarding Claim 4, Mayes et al. teach the active material particle size is about 30 nm or preferably smaller than 10 nm (par. 106).

Regarding Claim 5, Hoffman et al. teach the first pole is formed from the active material mixed with a conductive material and a polymeric binder (col. 6, lines 3-14).

Regarding Claim 6, Hoffman et al. teach said ions from the ionic conductor are Mg, Al, or Ca (Hoffman et al. claims 1-2).

Regarding Claim 7, Hoffman et al. teach said second pole contains magnesium or calcium (Hoffman et al. claim 2).

Regarding Claim 8, Hoffman et al. teach said ionic conductor is an electrolytic solution (Hoffman et al. abstract) or suggest a solid electrolyte (col. 2, lines 59-62).

Regarding Claim 9, Hoffman et al. teach said electrochemical device is a secondary battery (rechargeable, col. 1, lines 37-39).

Regarding Claim 10, Hoffman et al. teach an electrochemical device, which comprises a first pole (3), a second pole (2), and an ionic conductor (4), wherein said first pole containing an active material comprises managenese oxide or cobalt oxide (col. 5, lines 61-68, Group 8), and said ionic conductor containing Mg, Al, or Ca (Hoffman et al. claims 1-2). However, Hoffman et al. fail to teach said active material has an average particle diameter as small as 1 nanometer.

Mayes et al. teach an electrochemical cell comprising an electrochemical reaction wherein an ion conductive species is intercalated into a host material during the electrochemical reaction (par. 7), wherein the ion host particles preferably less than 10 nm in diameter because the use of finer particles minimizes the detrimental effects of volume change occuring naturally during the intercalation of the ion conductive species (par. 106). Mayes et al. further suggest the ion conductive species may be calcium or magnesium ions (par. 103). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the active material of Hoffman et al. have an average particle diameter as small as 1 nm because Mayes et al. teach that smaller particle sizes in electrochemical cells where intercalation occurs minimize the detrimental effects of volume change of the host material. Discovery of an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272 (CCPA 1980).

Regarding Claim 11, Hoffman et al. suggest that the active material is a mixture of a plurality of compounds ("at least one"), each of the plurality of compounds being represented by the general formula MX (col. 5, lines 61-68).

Regarding Claims 12-13, Hoffman et al. teaches the intercalation occurs to a degree of a maximum characteristic for each host structure, and beyond said degree the crystal structure will change, which is detrimental to the material (col. 7, lines 9-21). It is reasoned that if the crystal structure remains unchanged the crystal state will also remain unchanged because a change in crystal state would inherently change the crystal structure.

Regarding Claims 14-15, Hoffman et al. teach said active material is manganese oxide ($Mn_2O_3$), which has a ratio of M/X of 0.66.

Regarding Claims 16-17, Mayes et al. teach the active material particle size is about 30 nm or preferably smaller than 10 nm (par. 106).

Regarding Claim 18, Hoffman et al. teach said ions from the ionic conductor are Mg, Al, or Ca (Hoffman et al. claims 1-2).

Regarding Claim 19, Hoffman et al. teach said second pole contains magnesium or calcium (Hoffman et al. claim 2).

Regarding Claim 20, Hoffman et al. teach the first pole is formed from the active material mixed with a conductive material and a polymeric binder (col. 6, lines 3-14).

***Response to Arguments***

9. Applicant's arguments filed on October 20, 2008 have been fully considered, but they are not persuasive.

*Applicant argues:*

*(a) Hoffman et al. and Mayes et al. fail to teach at least some ions from the ionic conductor undergo surface interactions with particles in the active material; and*

*(b) Hoffman et al. and Mayes et al. fail to disclose or suggest lattice parameters of the active material are substantially unchanged after the surface interactions.*

In response to Applicant's arguments:

(a) As Applicant pointed out, Hoffman describes intercalation reactions as insertion of metal guest ions into inorganic host structures. Therefore, there must be surface interactions with the metal guest ions and the inorganic host structures. In other words, an interaction must occur for the metal guest ion to breach the surface of the host structure and insert itself within the structure.

(b) Applicant draws the teaching of Hoffman et al. out of context for the suggestion that the host structure produces multiple crystal phases. The very next sentence of Hoffman et al. (col. 7, lines 14-15) notes that "[s]tructural changes are detrimental and hinder cathode reversibility." As noted above, Examiner's position is that the active material of Hoffman et al. comprises lattice parameters that are substantially unchanged during charging and discharging because Hoffman et al. teach that only minor variations are evident in the crystallographic lattice constraints of the material (col. 7, lines 3-8).

***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Zachary Best whose telephone number is (571) 270-3963. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Thursday, 7:30 - 5:00 (EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dah-Wei Yuan can be reached on (571) 272-1295. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

zpb

/Dah-Wei D. Yuan/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1795